MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Approximately 85% of the working women are in the unorganised sector.

(b) The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 makes no distinction between male and female workers.The wages fixed under the Act in respect of workers working in employments given in the schedule to the Act are also equal to both male and female. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 further provides for equal wages for same or similar work. The enforcement machineries set up in Centre as well as States take necessary action in case of violations of the provision of these enactments.

As regards job security, the male and female workers employed in unorganised sector are equally exposed to risks to job security. However, the actions of the employers such as dismissals/ terminations whether taken under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 or otherwise are equally challengeable by both men and women by raising an industrial dispute under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

Release of bonded labourers

3581. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report published in "The Times of India" dated 2nd August, 1994 according to which a lone woman with determined efforts rescued not only her husband who was held in bondage in Gujarat but this led to the release of 436 more bonded labourers from the port town of Pori Bunder;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) what action Government propose to take against those responsible for this unlawful bondage;

(d) whether Government have any action plan to identify more bonded labourers engaged as coolies elsewhere; and

(e) if so, what are the details in this regard and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) According to the report received from the State Government of Gujarat, 512 inter-state migrant workers were rescued by the district authorities from the Ships at Bedi Bunder, Jam Nagar, Out of which 418 inter-state migrant workers hailing from Tamil Nadu and willing to go back to their native places were paid their arrears of wages amounting to Rs. 5,96,165/- and were also provided railway tickets worth Rs. 86,000/- for their journey to their native places. The entire cost was borne by the concerned ship owners/contractors etc. The remaining 94 labourers who were not willing to go back were provided some alternative employment of their choice and were paid back their wages totalling Rs. 1,17,795/-. This was also borne by the ship owners/contractors. Police complaints have been filed under the relevant provisions of the concerned Act against the companies and persons found employing these labourers.

Identification of bonded labourers is being done by the State Governments concerned who are competent under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 to do so. The Central Government has been advising the State Governments to conduct periodic surveys through their existing agencies.